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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF  
**COMMERCE**  
**NEWS**

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WASHINGTON, D.C. 20230

NATIONAL  
OCEANIC AND  
ATMOSPHERIC  
ADMINISTRATION

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NOAA-r118  
**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
May 17, 2000

### **NOAA Fisheries Improves Recreational Fishing Survey**

NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service has developed a new data collection method that will help fishery managers to better understand how saltwater anglers choose fishing trips, how they feel about conservation measures, and to better identify the issues important to the recreational community, the Commerce Department announced today.

"This project is part of an agency commitment to improving the information base used by state and federal agencies responsible for fisheries management policy," said Dr. William Fox, director of the NOAA Fisheries' Office of Science and Technology. "Results from this innovative survey approach will improve the ability to predict and evaluate the biological, economic and social consequences of alternative management policies for recreational fishing."

According to NOAA Fisheries, the survey will be of interest to the angling community since it directly seeks their views on important conservation and management issues by asking about their fishing experiences. The analytical approach being used was originally developed for the consumer market research sector and is being used by NOAA Fisheries for the first time to explore recreational fisheries.

"By surveying the opinions' of anglers from Maine to Virginia over the next 12 months, NOAA Fisheries will be able to gather information about saltwater recreational fishing participants that will help the agency make better management decisions," said Dr. Mark Holliday, NOAA Fisheries Division Chief for Statistics and Economics. "Information on the number of fishing trips anglers make and why they choose certain trips, also provides us with the ability to make estimates of the economic value of recreationally important fisheries."

The new recreational fishing data collection method will be part of the Marine Recreational Fishery Statistics Survey that NOAA Fisheries has been conducting nationwide since 1979. The recreational survey is used to help fishery managers make informed decisions regarding recreational fisheries.

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This new data collection effort will consist of two surveys. Part one is a field survey to gather information about effort, catch, and participation information. Anglers interviewed in the field will be asked to participate in part two of the survey. Approximately 5,000 of the anglers interviewed in the field will be asked to participate in part two of the survey. Part two will ask about a wide range of fishing related activities including target species, catch and release fishing, and preferences for different conservation management actions. Respondents can also choose to receive a copy of the survey results.

For more information about this effort, call Dr. Rob Hicks or Mr. Brad Gentner at NOAA Fisheries headquarters in Silver Spring, Md (301) 713-2328. A complete listing of MRFSS saltwater angling catch, effort, and participation data is also available through the Internet at <http://www.st.nmfs.gov/st1/econ/> or contacting the National Marine Fisheries Service, Office of Science and Technology, Division of Fisheries Statistics and Economics, 1315 East West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910.

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